

The Son of David in the Psalms of Solomon

The Psalms of Solomon are a collection of 18 Jewish psalms, probably composed in the first century BC, likely in response to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem under Pompey in 63 BC. *Despite the name, they were not written by Solomon.* They survive primarily in the Greek Septuagint, *although they were not part of the standard Jewish canon and were not universally included in Christian biblical collections.* The psalms contain the hope for a coming Davidic Messiah who will purge Jerusalem, defeat Israel's enemies, and rule in righteousness. *Psalms of Solomon 17–18 are particularly important for understanding Jewish messianic expectations near the time of Jesus,* because they portray the Messiah explicitly as a righteous “son of David” who gathers and restores Israel under God's rule.

Psalms of Solomon 17:23–36

See, O Lord, and raise up their king for them,
a son of David, for the proper time that you see, God,
to rule over Israel your servant.
And undergird him with strength
to shatter unrighteous rulers.
Cleanse Jerusalem from the nations that trample it in destruction,
to expel sinners from the inheritance
in wisdom, in righteousness,
to rub out the arrogance of the sinner like a potter's vessel,
to crush all their support with an iron rod;
to destroy lawless nations by the word of his mouth,
for gentiles to flee from his face at his threat,
and to reprove sinners by the word of their heart.
And he will gather a holy people whom he will lead in righteousness,
and he will judge tribes of the people sanctified by the Lord its God.
And he will no longer permit injustice to dwell among them,
and no person who sees wickedness will dwell with them.
For he will know them, because all of them are sons of God,
and he will divide them among their tribes upon the earth.
And no longer will an expatriate or foreigner dwell among them;
he will judge peoples and nations by the wisdom of his righteousness.
And he will have peoples of nations to serve him under his yoke,
and he will glorify the Lord notably over all the earth.
And he will cleanse Jerusalem with sanctification, as also from the beginning,
for nations to come from the edge of the earth to see his glory,
bringing as gifts its utterly weakened sons,
and to see the glory of the Lord that God glorified.
And he is a righteous king over them, taught by God,
and there is no injustice in his days in the middle of them;
because they all are holy, and their king is the anointed Lord.

Patterns of Prophetic Fulfillment

“I know that all God does will last forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it. God works so that people will be in awe of Him. Whatever is, has already been, and whatever will be, already is. God repeats what has passed.” [Ecclesiastes 3:14–15 HCSB]

Matthew’s language of “fulfillment” is often misunderstood if we hear it only in the modern sense of *prediction and completion*: the prophet predicted this exact event, and now that event has happened. Sometimes Matthew certainly works with direct prediction, but his use of the Old Testament is much richer than that.

His favorite fulfillment verb, *plēroō*, means “to fill,” “to fill up,” or “to bring to fullness.” In many cases, then, Matthew is not simply saying, “this is that.” He is saying, “**this fills that out**.” A person, event, or text from Israel’s story already had a real meaning in its own historical setting, but Matthew sees within it a pattern that was not yet exhausted. The text was, we might say, ***pregnant with significance***. When the story of Jesus unfolds, the earlier text comes into sharper focus while at the same time expanding in significance. What was initially local becomes universal; what was partial becomes climactic; what happened to Israel, David, Moses, or the righteous sufferer reaches its fullest expression in Jesus.

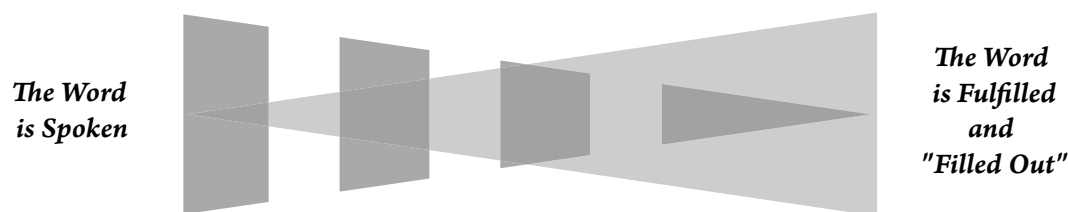
This is why some of Matthew’s fulfillment quotations can seem strange if we approach them merely as isolated predictions. Hosea 11:1—“Out of Egypt I called my son”—was originally looking backward to Israel’s exodus, not forward as a straightforward prediction of the Messiah. Yet Matthew applies it to Jesus in Matthew 2:15 because Jesus is recapitulating Israel’s story. Israel was God’s son who came out of Egypt, passed through the waters, entered the wilderness, and was tested; Jesus, the Son, comes out of Egypt, passes through the waters of baptism, enters the wilderness, and succeeds where Israel failed. *The earlier event becomes a type, and Jesus brings the pattern to its intended fullness.* Rather than treating the Old Testament as a collection of disconnected predictive prooftexts, *Matthew draws the reader into the whole scriptural story and shows how its characters, events, institutions, and promises converge in Christ.*

Thus, “fulfillment” in Matthew is not merely the checking off of predictions. It is the filling out of Scripture—the disclosure of dimensions that were genuinely present in the earlier text and story, but whose full weight could only be seen once the Messiah had come. In Jesus, the Word is not merely proven true; it is Full-Filled or Filled-Full.

The Typological Patterns of Prophetic Fulfillment

Dark Grey= FOCUS

Light Grey= SIGNIFICANCE



FOCUS: What at first is **general or vague**... over time... becomes very **specific**

SIGNIFICANCE: What at first seems **insignificant**... over time... becomes **universally significant**